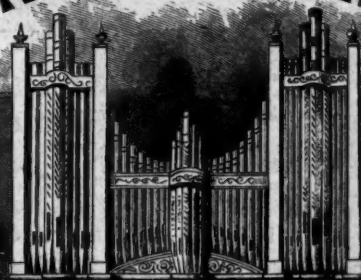


THE NONCONFORMIST

MUSICAL



JOURNAL

A Monthly Record

EDITED BY
E. MINSHALL,
Organist and Director of the Music at the
City Temple, E.C.

No. 9.—SEPT., 1888.

and Review.

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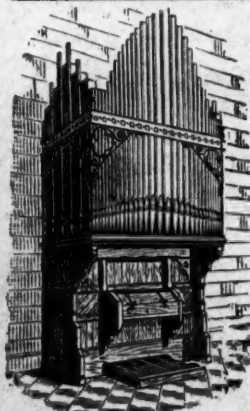
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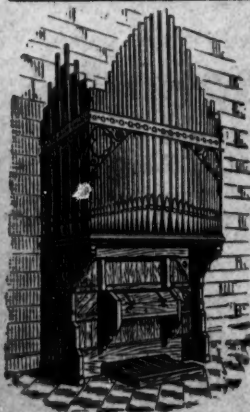
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Discordant Deacons.

FROM the many communications that reach us in respect to the improvement of our worship music, we regret to learn that in some places all attempts to make the services more attractive are met by serious opposition. Organists and their choirs devise schemes for making the sanctuary a place of interest to the masses, but their plans are frustrated by the narrow-minded objections on the part of the powers that be. Ministers have the reputation of being at the head of the obstructionists; but we believe that the blame does not rest at their door. The deacons are the real drawbacks, and why they should offer such strong opposition it is hard to conceive. They are, however, strongly conservative, and all modifications of the musical service are considered "innovations" which will lead to nobody knows where. Solos or verse anthems are in their opinion performances, and reduce the music to something like a concert. Alas! that any church is ruled by people who are unable to take a larger view of things. Ministers—or most of them, at least—are more liberal. They feel the necessity of keeping up with the times, and they know that if Nonconformists will not provide good music, many of their young people will undoubtedly go to the Established Church, where so much attention is paid to it. They, moreover, see that before they can begin their work they must get a congrega-

tion to preach to. If music will draw any who would otherwise not enter a place of worship, surely it is right and wise to use it as a means to an end. Many people who have gone to church for the sake of the music, have left it much better for something they heard in the sermon or in the prayer. It is the deacons who do not admit these things. In their opinion the custom of the past must be the rule for the future, and any attempt to alter the music for the better is thwarted at the earliest possible moment.

While we cannot doubt that these deacons do what they believe to be right, we believe that their judgment is the result of a want of a full and fair consideration of the subject. Rarely are they musical themselves; and frequently music, if not actually distasteful to them, is uninteresting, and fails to touch their emotions. If they attempted to sing a solo, or took part in a quartette, it would be a "performance" of a very amusing and, to musical hearers, painful kind. It is, however, unreasonable to measure other people's corn by their own bushel. It would not be in any way a "performance" if a member of the choir was to sing some suitable melody, say, "O rest in the Lord," in a quiet, unassuming manner and with religious fervour.

It will, of course, be quite understood that we do not refer to all deacons. Happily there are many churches who are blessed with leaders only too anxious to make the services what they should be, and who stand by their musical friends in their work. It is, however, well known that there are many officials such as we have described, and it is with the hope that we may enlarge their sympathies that we write.

We certainly would not encourage any attempt to alter the music of the church which would take away from its congregational character. People like singing well-known hymns to popular tunes, and it is an act of the highest spiritual benefit. On no account, therefore, should it be dispensed with. If, however, other music of a religious nature can be added, so much the better. Every service should comprise variety, in order that the tastes and needs of all may be met. None should be greedy and find fault because the whole service is not exactly such as they like. If there is something for each there is something for all, and none need go "empty away."

Organ recitals before or after service, flower services, solos, or verse anthems, are all useful in their way. Deacons, therefore, should endeavour to take a broad view of things, and encourage instead of thwart the musical friends who desire and offer to provide these aids to the work of the church.

OUR columns last month, and again this month, contain correspondence in reference to persons retaining their seats in the choir after their voices have become useless. Our surprise is that such people do not of their own accord retire. There comes a time to all when the voice fails. It is therefore no disgrace to acknowledge that fact and act

accordingly. If friends were more willing to do this, we imagine it would be more pleasant than being asked to resign, and it would certainly save the choir-master performing a very disagreeable duty.

A CORRESPONDENT, whose letter will be found in another column, suggests that some of our leading organists and choir-masters should occasionally undertake a musical mission amongst some of the small country churches. This might and probably would be useful. Many of the struggling churches in London, however, are equally in need of help and encouragement, and should therefore be included in the scheme.

A FEW days ago we turned into a large chapel in a flourishing town on the south coast, where a special service was going on, a well-known London minister being the preacher. There was an organist and there was a choir-master. All through the hymns the latter would persist in waving his hymn and tune books about in a most vigorous but utterly useless manner. The congregation took no notice of him whatever, nor did his choir. They all followed the lead of the organ, so the poor man was tiring himself for nothing. Surely where there is an organ there is no necessity for the choir-master to beat time.

BEFORE the service began, the assembling congregation were treated to a selection of pieces by the choir, conducted by the same gentleman. We have rarely heard at one time so many pieces of the sickly, namby-pamby kind, and, as they were nearly all sung very badly, our disgust was increased. If it is thought necessary to sing to people for twenty minutes before a service—and the idea is a good one—pray let the music be of an elevating and impressive character, and let it be rendered something like correctly, otherwise it is injurious instead of helpful.

WE are anxious to get music-sellers in towns where we are not already represented to take up the Journal. We do not propose that they should incur any liability. We shall be glad to hear from any firms willing to act. If any of our readers will kindly mention this fact to suitable people, we shall be obliged.

Church Psalmody.

By P. HARDING ROBERTS.

A paper read at the Festival of the English Congregational Churches of Flintshire.

(Continued from page 125.)

ONE of the greatest hindrances to good congregational singing is the failing with some choir-masters of endeavouring to vary the service by introducing new tunes every Sunday, in order to show off their own ability. Although there are now a large number able to take

their part, owing to the musical knowledge they possess, still the ability is not so general as to justify new tunes being introduced so frequently. Let a tune, after it is introduced, be sung often until well known, when another tune can be introduced. Another difficulty is to get the congregation to commence to sing together, keep time throughout the hymn, and end in strict tune. I think this can be accomplished by impressing upon those in attendance at the practices the importance of good time. At one period I experienced this difficulty, but I did not give way to the congregation, and frequently ended the tune before them. This, however, did not continue long, for very soon they accustomed themselves to *follow* instead of *leading*. In some churches I have noticed the choir start to sing immediately after the hymn is given out, and before the congregation has had time to stand; and sometimes the first line, often the second, is sung before the congregation can join. Time should be allowed for all to stand before the tune is commenced; and to give them an opportunity of doing so after the hymn is read, it is a good rule to sustain the soprano note, and, when all are standing, then commence the tune. If my suggestions were carried out, I think the object of our Association, viz., the improvement of congregational singing, would be obtained.

I am personally sorry that the custom which prevailed in the days of our forefathers has ceased to exist, and that the violin, cello, and other instruments have been banished from our churches. Possibly the very suggestion of such instruments being again introduced would be resented with horror, and, as being sacrilegious, yet we raise no objection to the sound which such instruments could give being combined and produced by an organ. Do we regard the service as being less acceptable to God, simply because the talent possessed is devoted to the playing instead of singing? The playing upon musical instruments was strictly enjoined in the services of the Temple. The objection is not so much to the instruments as to the deviation from the recognised service, which is now looked upon by many as requiring no reform.

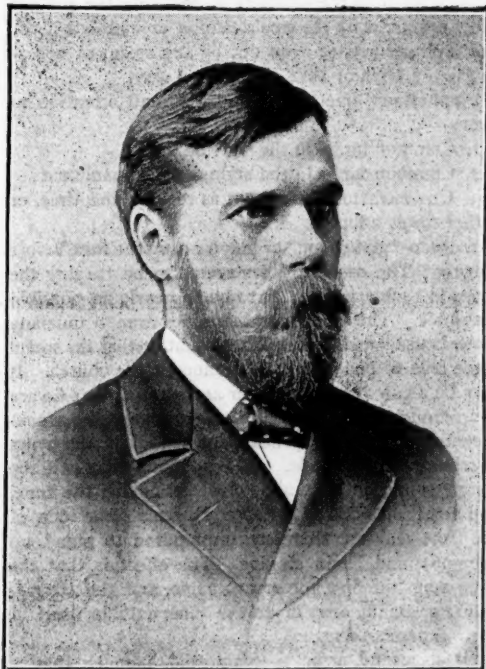
The introduction of hymns into the service was even more strongly opposed some centuries ago than the reintroduction of musical instruments is at the present, and I feel convinced that in the future, instruments will once more occupy the place in the service which they formerly did.

I look forward to the time when the works of the great masters will be given at frequent intervals in our service. Why should the world have the best of the music? Can it be that we consider the oratorios of the great composers only fit for the public hall or concert room? The interest in advanced music is evinced by the attendance at those churches where Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" or Spohr's "Last Judgment," or other similar works are given; and why should we hesitate to introduce this class of music into our service wherever it is possible? Good music helps to better worship. It will also elevate the mind and fit it to receive the word of truth. Different persons have different ways of being influenced, for whilst in some instances preaching has failed to awaken the soul, yet under the power and influence of religious music, many

have been roused from their lethargy, and brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In conclusion, I would briefly refer to one other important subject, viz., our duty to the young. As the hope of the Church is in the young, in like manner the improvement of congregational singing will to a great extent depend upon the attention devoted to the young. There is a great power in music. Singing hath charms, and is very attractive and alluring to the young. We ought therefore to encourage them to attend the practices and take part in the service, thus training them in their youth for greater services required of them as they advance in years.

Music at Unity Church, Islington.



ALTHOUGH the Unitarians are not one of the strongest bodies of Nonconformists, they pay considerable attention to their worship-music, an example that might with great advantage be followed by some of the other denominations. Many of our readers will remember the very sensible letter of the Rev. T. W. Freckelton, on the uses of worship-music, which appeared in our first number. His remarks led us to resolve to pay an early visit to his church to see how far his ideas are carried out.

Making our way, therefore, one very wet Sunday evening (for which this summer has been noted), we found a nice Gothic building, which has recently been so renovated that it looks as if it had just been built. The interior of the church is pretty, several rich stained-glass windows adding to the beauty of the building. The chancel is

tastefully decorated; the pulpit—a handsome stone structure—is placed on the right-hand side of the chancel; and the organ—an old-fashioned, sweet-toned instrument, but fully equal to the requirements of the church—is placed on the left-hand side. In front of the organ the choir, usually numbering about fifteen, sit. The music is under the very able direction of Mr. T. R. Croger, the esteemed and energetic secretary of the Nonconformist Choir Union (whose likeness we give above), who is the leading tenor. He is well supported by Mrs. Stanesby as leading soprano, Miss Kelly as contralto, and Mr. Fairburn as bass, the other members being amateurs. The organ is most judiciously manipulated by Miss Suter, a daughter of Madame Suter, the well-known professional vocalist.

Immediately after Mr. Freckelton entered the pulpit, the choir sang a sanctus unaccompanied. This was followed by a prayer, at the end of which the Lord's Prayer was very sweetly chanted by the choir. This was also unaccompanied. The first hymn, in which the congregation joined was, "Oh, bless the Lord my God!" which was sung to the old-fashioned but ever-popular tune Prague. The distressing three-beat note at the end of the third line was, however, observed, instead of singing through the third and fourth lines without any stop, the arrangement adopted in most of the modern hymnals. The tune was taken faster than we are accustomed to hear it, but it was nevertheless very steady.

Two anthems were sung during the service, viz., Tour's "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house," and Randegger's "Praise the Lord." It was very evident that these portions of the service were left entirely to the choir, for, with the exception of the minister, not a single person stood up. The words of the anthems, however, were freely distributed over the building, so the congregation could follow. We are certainly of opinion that it is well for the anthem to be left to the choir only, but it appears to us reverent, and as an act of worship, that the congregation should stand while it is being sung. Both pieces were effectively given, though Randegger's bold and stirring composition seemed to want a much larger choir to give it its full effect. The last movement would have been better had it been taken faster.

The next hymn was "Fountain of light and living breath," which was sung to the tune St. Matthias, "and which went very well till the last bar but one was reached, when the congregation (as is the case with nineteen out of twenty congregations) would not keep out the time of the dotted note, and so got ahead of the choir. As an example of the want of attention paid to the words by congregations generally, we may say that in one verse, where occurs the passage—

"What my dull head cannot aspire
To know, Lord, teach me to admire,"

the majority of the people made a distinct stop after the word "aspire," thus making nonsense of the hymn. It is only fair to the choir to say that they did their best to counteract this, but the con-

gregation did not seem to take the hint. Oh that congregations would listen to the choir, and learn from them how to do it, instead of following their own sweet will and making a mess of it!

The concluding hymn and the tune were both strange to us. After the Benediction, Stainer's sevenfold "Amen" was reverently sung by the choir. The order of the morning service is somewhat different. That usually comprises a liturgy with responses, two or three chants, the *Te Deum*, two hymns, and one anthem.

The musical service may fairly be described as elaborate for a Nonconformist Church. It is, however, in no sense a display or a performance. The music rendered by the choir alone is sung in a devotional spirit, and the hymns are taken up heartily by the whole congregation. So much choir-singing—especially with the people seated—reminded us of the quartette-singing we have heard in American churches. There was, however, this great difference, that though seated, the congregation seemed to join in heart, if not in voice, in the worship, while our American friends appeared to us to treat it as a kind of entertainment.

Occasionally one of Mendelssohn's Psalms, or Spohr's "God, Thou art great," or some other work of equal proportions is given entirely, as part of the service. A church who possesses a choir able to undertake this efficiently may be congratulated on having such competent and useful leaders of the psalmody.

THE PHONOGRAPH'S MUSIC.—An exhibition of Mr. Edison's new phonograph, especially in the reproduction of singing and the sounds of musical instruments, was given recently at the laboratory of the inventor. Experiments were made with a piano, violin, cornet, and clarinet, and with all four instruments together. According to the promises held out by Mr. Edison, the phonograph will become the singer, the pianist, and the violinist for the million, enabling the poorest farmer and his family, living on the outskirts of civilisation, to hear an echo of the world's great players and singers, if nothing more. For many weeks the inventor has been at work adapting the instrument to music. For recording the music of the piano a funnel of cardboard, five feet long and two feet in diameter at the bell, was placed with the bell above the strings of the piano and the small end at the mouthpiece of the phonograph. The phonograph's version of some chords and a polka was clear, distinct, and musical; even the "ring" on vibration of the strings when a chord was struck was perfectly audible. The result was loud enough and musical enough to give pleasure to a sensitive ear. With a funnel for magnifying the sound placed on the machine, the music sounded as the music of a piano might sound coming through a thick partition; every note could be heard, but much of the musical effect was lost. The phonograph's reproduction of music was invariably a trifle sharper in pitch than the original, owing to the fact that the indenting stylus offered more resistance to the motor than the reproducing stylus, and the motor therefore moved faster and imparted more vibrations to the diaphragm in the same space of time. Of the different instruments tried, the cornet gave back the loudest and clearest tones. The cornet air given out by the phonograph could be easily distinguished twenty or thirty feet away from the instrument.

Some Common Faults in Service-Playing.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

I.

ALTHOUGH the accompaniment of the service-music in our churches now receives much more thoughtful care and attention than it used to, and has, in fact, of late years become a special art, yet still, in occasional attendance at various churches, one observes frequent faults of style or errors of judgment, which generally only need to be pointed out to be easily corrected. I have thought that calling attention to a few of these which have most often struck me might be useful at least to the younger and less-experienced of our organists. These faults are doubtless, as I have said, often merely errors of judgment or oversights, and sometimes arise from the difficulty of realising the precise effect produced by the combinations or methods used, and their occurrence does not by any means of necessity imply want of skill in a general way.

I will classify the points I wish to call attention to thus:—

1. Common faults in the "giving out."
2. Common faults in the style of accompaniments.
3. Unsatisfactory treatment as regards the time, or rather *tempo* adopted.

1. As to "giving out," or playing over the tune before singing. The modern fancy seems to be to play the tunes in such a manner as to be as nearly as possible inaudible. The swell diapasons, or even a dulciana alone is used, and the swell kept shut, so that the sound quite fails to penetrate any distance in the church. It may be as sweet as a summer zephyr to those who are near enough to hear it, but it does not inspire a congregation to join with "heart and voice" in the hymn to which it is a prelude. In fact, more than half the congregation are quite unable to distinguish the tune, and sometimes do not get as much as a clear idea of the key, and are therefore unprepared to stand up promptly and begin singing. The effect is that the choir sings the first line or two alone, and the congregation gradually drop in as the tune unfolds itself to their understanding.

Or a second error is committed, namely, that of adopting a different speed in the giving out to that intended for the singing of the hymn. This ensures a bad start, and rarely is the time adjusted before the third or fourth verse is reached.

It is most important that the tempo and rhythm of the tune should be distinctly impressed on the congregation by the method of giving out, which must therefore be clearly audible and distinct as to time.

To ensure this it is not needful to adopt a noisy style; a clear solo stop, a soft open diapason, or flutes will be sufficient generally; but a good effect may be gained sometimes in preluding a grand jubilant hymn by using a louder and more striking combination, which will arouse listless hearers, and awaken some enthusiasm in the choir and congregation. At the same time anything extravagant or in bad taste must always be avoided.

2. Amongst the common faults in accompaniment, I

may mention first the unseasonable or too frequent use of the staccato style, which gives a jerky and undevotional effect to the singing. How distressing it is to hear a hymn of meditative or prayerful tone chopped up by a series of jerky chords! That this is done to "keep up the time" is really no fair excuse for it. Better let the time suffer even than so maltreat a hymn of that kind. That the occasional use of the staccato is good I readily allow; it is the too frequent, and indeed almost constant use of it which is one of the common faults of the present day that I would earnestly deprecate.

But the opposite extreme to the above, viz., indefiniteness and lack of phrasing, which takes all life and animation from the music, is a not unfrequent error. This matter of phrasing is indeed of the greatest importance, and be it understood that it must follow the *words* rather than the music in the case of hymns, although, of course, it is by far best when both correspond. When, however, this cannot be, the musical phrasing must give way, otherwise we may produce such readings as these:—

"O God of Beth—el by Whose hand
Thy peo—ple still are fed;
Who through this wea—ry pilgrimage
Hast all our fath—ers led," etc.

Or

"Uplift the ban—ner, let it float
Skyward and sea—ward, high and wide," etc.

This matter requires thoughtful study, and intelligent appreciation of the niceties of punctuation and phrasing involved.

Other faults are, an overpowering weight of organ on the one hand, or a lack of sufficient support to the voices on the other; also sometimes the extravagant use of sudden and violent changes from *ff.* to *pp.*, etc. This last may not always be a fault however; much depends on the object in view, and even more on the efficiency of the choir to keep the singing from collapse. If the choir is a good one, and not likely to be disconcerted by sudden changes, such effects may be very good in certain cases; and an occasional verse taken without accompaniment may be an advantage. But for congregational singing a certain amount of organ is needed to inspire confidence in almost all cases, and I have heard a congregation which was singing well, quite nonplussed and almost silenced by the sudden and uncalled-for withdrawal of support from the organ. This, perhaps, would not happen if our congregations were not now so accustomed to a rather full, and often too preponderating instrumental accompaniment, which renders them timid when it is reduced. This is one of the penalties we have to pay for the undoubted advantages gained by the use of the organ in other respects. Care and judgment, together with a thorough knowledge of the effect produced by the various combinations used, will enable any organist of taste and common sense to avoid these errors. In this connection I may refer to some remarks by a writer in the *Guardian* lately. He says: "In by far the greater number of churches in villages and country towns, as well as in nine out of ten of the parish churches in large and populous towns, the musical portion of the services will be found to consist of an

organ performance accompanied by voices; of vocal music, properly so-called, there is none. . . . It would be a great step in reform if every organist in the country would pledge himself to play just half as loud in each part of the service as he has been accustomed to do." This is, perhaps, going rather too far; at all events, until more attention is given to the vocal part of the music of our services, and fuller and more harmonious singing is obtained, by the members of our congregations taking more active and personal interest in the matter. Still, there is a real vein of truth and good sense in the remarks.

A few other faults in accompaniments may be briefly mentioned; for instance, the too constant use of the reed stops; the lack of variety and contrast on the one hand, and on the other sometimes a too frequent use of florid accompaniments—such as runs, imitations of birds singing, of thunder, and other sounds of nature, which effects may easily be overdone, and destroy the devotional feeling of the hymns by calling attention rather to the playing than to the sentiment of the words sung. This last is, however, not a frequent fault in Nonconformist churches at all events, and no player possessed of good feeling and refined taste is likely to fall into the error in its worst forms.

(To be continued.)

Holiday Music.

THERE seems no lack of music of some kind or other at every seaside place of any size and importance during the short period known as "the season." A good band is considered a great attraction, hence in many cases the corporation retains the services of an efficient orchestra, which performs twice or thrice every day. Frequently this band contains some very clever players, and their performances are therefore appreciated by large audiences. Their *repertoire* is fairly large, but the music is decidedly light. Many persons who can thoroughly enjoy a symphony in St. James's Hall seem unequal to listening to anything so solid in a pier pavilion. Certain it is that it would not be generally approved of, even if the performers were equal to a good rendering. Possibly this may be accounted for by the fact that when people are out for a holiday they need rest of brain as well as body, and are therefore indisposed to listen to anything that cannot be at once comprehended without thought and close attention. The programmes are usually made up of such items as selections from some of the operas (Sullivan's comic operas being special favourites), waltzes, marches, overtures, etc. Such pieces are thoroughly enjoyed, even by the common herd, as is evidenced by the eagerness with which seats, both free and otherwise, are taken for every performance. And how abundant is the applause and rapturous the demand for an encore—the nuisance of all concert-rooms! The obliging conductor, knowing that his engagement greatly depends upon his pleasing the visitors, readily responds to these demands, and the consequence is that the performance is of an interminable length, much to the gratification of the many lovers whose billing and cooing in the quiet recesses of the

pier is perhaps the sweeter for the sound of the sweet strains that reach their ears.

Not very much can be said in favour of the multitude of itinerant musicians—otherwise mendicants—that infest our watering-places in shoals. From early morning to nearly midnight the unmelodious and irritating noises, from almost every instrument under the sun, are heard. The street musician requires a change of air, the same as other people, and he finds it a very profitable arrangement to combine "business with pleasure." Saffron Hill therefore invades Eastbourne, Hastings, Ramsgate, and Margate, during the summer months. The Londoner who is unfortunate enough to have to stay in London is thus relieved of an intolerable nuisance, and those who bask in the sun on the shore of the mighty deep have their pleasures considerably tempered by the discord of many performers all playing different melodies, on different instruments, in every variety of style. Besides the German band, the street piano, the old-fashioned grinding organ, the solo cornet, the solo violin, there may be seen some new kinds of out-door musical instruments and entertainments. Here is a man who does his level best to make himself into an orchestra. His leading instrument is the concertina, which he manipulates in the usual way. To his elbows are attached drumsticks, and with these he plays the drum which hangs on his back. On the top of the drum are cymbals, which he sets in motion by a string fastened to one of his feet. Instead of a hat he wears a helmet covered with bells, which ring with the shake of his head. Thus he can play four instruments at one time!! He is not content with being a simple nuisance, but makes himself a fourfold culprit. To gain the sympathy, and especially the coppers of the people, he manages to push in front of him a perambulator containing a miserable-looking baby. Such extraordinary mountebanks ought to be confined in asylums for the deaf, where their hideous noises would do no injury.

Then there is the very general combination of violin and harp. The former is wretchedly played, and to add to the discord, is accompanied by the latter much out of tune. Nor is this all. The violinist frequently has got the melody fairly correct; but oh, the accompaniment! It is made for the occasion, and so long as *something* is played, it matters little to the performers whether it be in a major or minor key, or whether the notes are anything like correct. If they end together (they rarely begin together, as the violinist must get on a bar or two before the harpist knows what is to be played) the performance is, in their eyes, satisfactory.

Niggers or Christy Minstrels are almost as abundant as blackberries in September. They seem to be of various kinds, from the most vulgar up to the refined. The general quality of their performances is improving. There are now several troupes of respectable, well-to-do young men, who, for the pleasure of the thing principally, have taken up the "profession," and for several weeks in the summer give their entertainment on the beach in different towns. They go round with the hat like their brethren in the art, and thus pay the expenses of the holiday. Their singing is far above the average of such performers, and their jokes

and stories are such as will not offend the most fastidious taste. They are general favourites with all the children, and their endeavours to amuse are appreciated by many children of older growth.

Another rather novel kind of entertainment is to have an ordinary cottage piano mounted on a low hand-truck, and for one man to play solos and accompany his partner, who provides the vocal part of the performance. Occasionally some very good playing of the dashing, firework kind is heard, and the vocalist sometimes sings with considerable ability.

It would be a wonderful relief to the general public, and in the long-run a benefit to the people themselves, if all mechanical players who require no skill whatever, but simply the ability to turn a handle, were prohibited by law from playing out-doors. Alas! what has music come to when melodies can be purchased at twopence per foot, and all that is required is to place the sheet in a machine and turn a handle, and the manipulator is called a (street) musician! On the other hand, we would not wholly condemn those who require skill and have had long practice before they make their appearance before the street public. Many of these play with taste, and should receive some reward for their labours.

What can we say as to the music to be heard in the churches and chapels at holiday time? The old saying, "Make hay while the sun shines," applies with great force at all seaside resorts. During August and September many people have to make their income for the year, and consequently their usual duties are for the time put on one side. Consequently in many cases the choirs are much reduced in numbers, or if the members are able to be in their places on Sundays the weekly practices have to be given up. The result is that the music is below its usual standard, and visitors, not making due allowance for the exceptional circumstances, speak ill of what they hear. Would it not be possible for visitors who are members of choirs to render help? Offers of assistance would certainly be gratefully accepted in most cases. In one or two instances a few members of some London choirs have undertaken entirely the music at a small seaside chapel, adding much to the attractiveness of the service. This example might be followed with advantage—in fact, now and again choirs might endeavour to arrange their holiday with a view of combined efforts in rendering help to some weak church.

To musicians a holiday would lose some of its charms if there were no music of any kind. The misfortune is that, taking it all round, it is not of far better quality. There is room for great reformation in respect to holiday music.

THE vicar of a country parish was suddenly taken ill, and a churchwarden was deputed to find a substitute to preach on the morrow, which was Sunday. The notice was very short, and he had a great difficulty in filling the pulpit, it being the season when the majority of ministers take their holidays. Finally he decided to call upon the bishop and request him to conduct the service. He did so, and the bishop at once complied. "I hope, sir," said the churchwarden apologetically, "that you don't think it presumption, sir. A worse preacher would ha' done for us very well if I had only know'd where to find him."

Sunday School Musical Festivals.

BY LUTHER HINTON,

Conductor of the London Sunday School Choir.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS and all matters connected with them have for many years been very close to my heart, and I have always felt that the Sunday-school, next to home, should be the very happiest of all places, not only to teachers, but scholars. Are they so? That is a question more easily answered by those who do not understand them than by those who dare to investigate the matter more fully. Alas! I fear that the verdict by those who *do* know something of them will be that the school is not always what it should be to the scholars. Why is this? Would children call that a happy home that was made attractive in appearance and interest only once a week? And this I fear is the case with many of our Sunday-schools. I want, if possible, to arouse our teachers to the fact that many of our elder scholars are drifting away because the attractions are lacking in interest to them.

The Sunday-school has done a grand work in the past—all honour to the teachers who have worked faithfully and well—but the time has now arrived when something beyond the actual Sunday work must be done. It is a mistake to suppose that the real work of a Sunday-school teacher begins and ends with instruction from the four Gospels, with a dash or two of doctrinal vaccination. Something is wanted beyond the Sunday work. Monday, Tuesday, and the four other days bring their temptations, and also their cravings after some employment for the mind. Whatever is provided to meet this want should interest and instruct our scholars. Science has for many a juvenile mind a wonderful attraction. The wonders of the telescope and microscope and many other such instruments that could be named are most interesting; but I have always found *music* to be the crowning amusement. Boys may ride their bicycles and play cricket in fine weather; football will bring them together on cold, frosty days, and skating when there is ice firm enough to bear them. The girls may, with wisdom and decorum, join in many of these enjoyments. But that which will give the most pleasure to all is music when properly rendered. What a charm it has in the public services and in the Sunday-school! how eagerly will even the boys (the often despised boys) learn and try to work up their alto part! And how interesting music may become in the home when the several members of the family can take their parts in the old-fashioned madrigal, glee, or part-song! and further, how much more attractive does the school anniversary become when the scholars are thoroughly interested in the matter! And it will be found that the interest will increase a hundredfold when a few scholars join together to render some work suitable to their abilities. By-and-by they will want to join in still larger numbers, and sing better music, or I will say music of a higher class, and so not only give themselves pleasure, but delight to those who will listen to them. I may be met with the remark, "This is all very well in large towns and cities, but in our villages it can't be done." I object to the "*can't*," as I am

sure it may be done—even in a village, where there may be but two or three schools. These surely could meet together—that is, when the larger catholicity comes into fashion, and Christians will not boast so much that they are of this or the other sect. Once or twice a year schools *could* and *should* meet together for such purposes, and in a year or two, after continual practising together, the singers would soon learn to love the work. Of course in London this can be done easily enough, and I am happy to say *is* done, but not to the extent it ought to be. Even in our greatest gatherings of Sunday-school scholars what a comparatively small proportion of the London schools assemble! I know the thing is growing, and the day will come when it shall largely increase, but I desire to hasten it. I have thought that the NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL would be a splendid medium of communication in which teachers could ventilate their thoughts upon the subject.

Let me say a few words as to how a festival of scholars and teachers may be managed. I think all would agree upon one thing—that is, the desirability of better musical services in our schools and congregations; therefore we start well. Now suppose a school of, say, 250 scholars, with perhaps 15 teachers. The latter will probably be divided as follows: 4 bass, 3 tenor, 3 lady alto, 5 soprano. I assume that all the teachers know something of music; if they do not they have something to learn to finish their education as teachers. Let these arrange their scholars and select voices. A few of the boys will readily try alto, but most of them will sing the treble, or melody. The majority of the girls will sing the air, though a few of them may be persuaded (and it will need persuasive power) to sing alto. Then the neighbouring schools should be induced to do likewise, and all join together for a festival. The selection of the music ought to be rather above the average, because the new choir-members will then find something better worthy of their attention and work. There are plenty of good and easy anthems, suitable for the purpose, by our great English composers, such as Goss, Stainer, Barnby, and Sullivan. The older masters are more crude and not quite so melodious, and are therefore not so acceptable to young people. The practice of hymn-tunes (I mean quite the higher class of tune) will well repay the trouble of learning. Some of the tunes to irregular metres in "Hymns Ancient and Modern" or Allon's "Congregational Psalmist," also the "Bristol," afford good practice and serve a useful purpose for the Sunday services. After a while the interest will grow if a little trouble is taken with the young people, and they, as well as the elder members, will soon be desirous of attacking something more advanced. A small cantata, or such a work as Farmer's "Christ and His Soldiers," will be very acceptable. When thoroughly learnt, a public performance in the school-room, or better still in the church or chapel, might be given, and why not on a Sunday afternoon? It would be a change to the school-teaching. Frequently a long and very dull address is taken as a change; but surely an afternoon's music by the scholars and teachers will prove far more attractive and interesting to all.

This may appear to some as almost impossible; but I know that the largest gatherings of trained Sunday-school scholars and teachers have grown out of just such a beginning as I have suggested. The London Sunday School Choir, with its 8,000 to 10,000 members, had its commencement in a united gathering of scholars and teachers in the east of London, and every town and village may have its own centre of Sunday-school choirs if only the teachers and friends will agree and work. Let us try to brighten the homes and the leisure hours of our scholars by refining music, and then the day may come when the congregations will raise their voices in Handel's "Hallelujah" as part of the service to God's glory and praise.

AN AMATEUR ORGAN BUILDER.—The following curious letter has been received by a large firm of organ builders, and forwarded to us for the edification and amusement of our readers:—

"DEAR SIR,—Would you kindly send me a kind of a price list. The price of leather taped wires, leather nuts, Stop nobbs lettered, and the price of an obe stop from fiddle G to A, 27 notes. I have a small organ with Open Diapason, from tenor E to D in alti, Stopt Diapason from CC to D in alti, 51 pipes; Dulcaina from middle C to D., Principle CC to D, Fifteenth CC to D, Stopt Diapason, and part of Open Diapason is wood, and the rest metal. Bellows, 2 ft. by 3 ft. 4 ins., single feeder. Sound board, 4 ft. 1 ins. by 17 ins. The organ stands about 7 ft. 6 ins. high. Would Bellows 2 ft. by 4 ft., two feeders, be large enough to serply wind for the following stops on

● SWELL ORGAN.

- 1 Stopt Diapason 56 pipes.
- 2 Open Diapason 37 pipes.
- 3 Dulcaina 37 pipes.
- 4 Principle 56 pipes.
- 5 Fifteenth 56 pipes.

SOLO ORGAN.

- 6 Obe fiddle G to A 27 pipes.

PEDELE ORGAN.

- 7 Bourdon 16 ft. 30 notes.
- 8 Stopt Diapason 30 notes.

COUPLERS.

- 9 Pedles to Swell.
- 10 Swell to Pedles.
- 11 Solo to Swell.
- 12 Swell to Solo.
- 13 Octive Couplrs to Swell.
- 14 Tremelo to Solo.
- 15 Tremelo to Swell.
- 16 Quaint to Pedles.

The Bourdon will be acted as 16 and 8 ft. stops on one set of pipes, and Quaint by coupler. If Bellows will not be large enough please state what I may ommit. The solo organ I propose to have placed over the key board in frunt of the swell.—Yours, etc."

A GENTLEMAN at a musical party, where the lady was very particular not to have the concert of sweet sounds interrupted, was freezing during the performance of a long concert piece, and seeing that the fire was going out, asked a friend, in a whisper, how he should stir the fire without interrupting the music. "Between the bars," replied the friend.

The Music of the Early Christian Church.

BY ORLANDO A. MANSFIELD, MUS. BAC. T.C.T., F.C.O.,
L. MUS. T.C.L.

THE commencement of a new and progressive era in Church history or religious thought has often been inaugurated by a remarkable revival in the domain of contemporary art and literature. Thus the Christian dispensation, ushered in with a *Gloria* whose echoes still vibrate through the night of human sin and sorrow, was, at the time of its advent, the dawn of a new departure and a higher development in the intellectual and artistic, as well as in the spiritual world.

We know that music as an art and a science was in existence long before the birth of Christ, but our modern tonal system is undoubtedly derived from the ecclesiastical modes or scales which owed their nomenclature and systematic arrangement to the talent and industry of some of the dignitaries of the early Church.

However, before we proceed to inquire into the nature, performance, and effect of early Christian music, we must make a short digression, in order to ascertain the nature of the verbal material with which this music was associated.

The consensus of opinion among ancient and modern authorities is to the effect that that portion of the worship of the early Church which was set to music and generally sung was of two kinds—1st, *liturgical*; 2nd, *metrical*.

On this point, unfortunately, the Bible sheds little if any light. The hymn (*marg.* psalm) sung by our Saviour and His disciples at the close of the Last Supper (Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26) was undoubtedly the concluding portion of the "Hallel," Psalms cxv.-cxviii., still sung (together with Psalms cxiii.-cxiv.) at every celebration of the Jewish Passover.

St. Paul, too, makes no direct allusion to musical worship, save in Ephesians v. 19, and Colossians iii. 16. The "psalms" here mentioned were probably those of David or other sacred writers, as sung by the Jews; but the expression, "hymns and spiritual songs," seems to hint at a regular hymnology, which is almost certain to have been in existence about A.D. 100. What might have been the character of the praises sung by Paul and Silas in the darkness of the Philippian dungeon, or whether (as some learned critics have imagined) certain passages in the Epistles and the Apocalypse were fragments of early Christian hymns, we cannot at present ascertain. But as every student of Church history is aware, the liturgical worship of the early Church consisted in the first place of chanted psalms or portions, to which were afterwards added many original responses, prayers, and hymns, so that about the end of the sixth century the verbal material of the Communion Service at least stood almost exactly as it is now found in the Mass of the Roman Church. The earliest record we possess of any definite religious hymnology is given us in the writings of Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, who flourished about the middle of the first century. Speaking of the Therapeutists, a Jewish sect who had seceded from the Essenes, he says:—

"After supper their sacred songs began. When all were arisen, they selected from the rest two choirs—one of men and one of women—in order to celebrate some festival; and from each of these a person of a majestic form, and well skilled in music, was chosen to lead the band. They then chanted hymns in honour of God, composed in different measures (or metres) and modulations, now singing together, and now answering each other by turns." The first Christian hymn-writers of whom we possess anything like accurate information, seem to have been Hilary, of Poitiers (died A.D. 367), and Hierotheus, of the Eastern Church. Their example was followed by St. Basil (died A.D. 379) and Gregory Nazianzen (326-390), both of whom are said to have written hymns for the use of the Oriental churches; while it is recorded that the Maronites of Lebanon sung hymns written for their use by St. Ephraim, who died about A.D. 370. But superior to all these was Ambrose, of Milan (c. 340-397), to whom is attributed the authorship of more than a dozen hymns, of which several have been translated into the English language. The hymns of Ambrose were imitated by other writers of his period, and to such productions were given the title "Ambrosian." Among heretical sects, too, the custom of hymn-singing was in considerable vogue, for we are told that the heretical songs of the Arians were adopted by the Bishop of Laodicea in 381, and were continually to be heard in the streets of the Constantinople of that day.

Having thus considered the verbal material to which the music of the early Church was wedded, we must next proceed to inquire into the nature of the music itself. Perhaps we cannot do better, at least for the sake of clearness, than to divide our subject into that most orthodox division of three parts, considering the music of the early Church with regard to

I. ITS MUSICAL CHARACTER.

This was determined to a large extent by exterior influence of a two-fold nature. On the one hand stood the traditional Jewish service, derived perhaps in the first place from the music of the Egyptians transmitted through the agency of Moses, afterwards elaborated in the days of the first temple, and re-established in the time of the second; while on the other hand was displayed the music of ancient Greece, with its definite scale system and numerous musical instruments. Whether the Egyptians, Hebrews, or Greeks employed regular harmonic accompaniments to any of their melodies is as yet an open question. Certain it is, however, that the music of the early Church was in character (1st) *vocal*, and (2nd) *unisonal*. The entire absence of harmony and the consequent exclusive employment of unisonal singing in the early Church is proved by the fact that even harmony of the crudest possible description was scarcely known before the tenth century, and when we come to consider the tonal characteristics of early Christian music we shall see that even if harmony had been in existence the peculiar construction of the ecclesiastical scales was not favourable to its growth and progress, while owing to the use of various instruments at pagan feasts and festivals the employment of any instru-

mental aid was regarded as a heathenish innovation not for a moment to be tolerated. Hence we find St. Jerome insisting "that a Christian maiden should be entirely ignorant of the flute and lyre, and therefore of the debased purposes for which they were employed."

It is stated that about A.D. 200 a flute was used to accompany the vocal music at a celebration of the Last Supper by the church at Alexandria. Further we know that St. Cecilia, the celebrated female martyr of the Aurelian persecution, who was said by St. Augustine to have been converted to the Christian faith through the instrumentality of music, has often been represented as playing strings and keyed instruments. Such a description, however, can only be regarded as a mediæval fancy, while the popular tradition which would make her the inventor and patron saint of the organ is too erroneous to require further refutation. The use of instrumental music by the Alexandrian Christians can, therefore, only be regarded as the exception proving the general rule.

An organ of a most primitive kind, consisting of a few pipes placed over a wind chest, was known before the time of St. Cecilia, and there are some writers who venture to assert that Ambrose introduced instrumental accompaniments into his church at Milan. But even the rude species of organ above described was not employed in divine service, even as an exception, until about A.D. 400, and Ambrose would not introduce any other instruments on account of the prejudice arising from their employment in pagan festivities. Even in the days and after the time of Gregory the Great instrumental accompaniments were only employed on special occasions, and never in the ordinary church service.

The early organ, too, had no keys, and was only capable of playing the melody, or at best a drone bass accompaniment.

Our next step must be to ascertain upon what scale system the music of the early Church was founded. There is sufficient evidence to prove that with the exception of such melodies as were derived from Hebraic sources the church song of the early Christians was (3rd) *tonal*—i.e., possessing regularly defined scales and keys. These were doubtless first arranged according to the system of the Greeks, which comprised a series of fifteen sounds; each scale arranged from these sounds containing two equal parts called tetrachords—i.e., two whole tones and a semitone. From the Grecian system Ambrose of Milan is credited with having evolved four scales, which he termed the Authentic Modes, probably with a view to disguising their pagan origin. A fair idea of the crude effect, doubtful tonality according to modern ideas, and entire unfitness for the purposes of harmony as we understand it, which must have arisen from the use of these scales, may be obtained by regarding the first Authentic Mode, named the Dorian, as from D to D upon the white keys of the pianoforte; the second, the Phrygian, as from E to E; the third, the Lydian, from F to F; and the fourth, the Mixolydian, from G to G. In these keys, or modes, Ambrose composed a large number of chants for church use, some of which are still used in the liturgical worship of the Roman Church. But the work of Ambrose was perfected and completed by

Gregory the Great (544-604), who added four other scales, each a fourth below the Authentic Modes. The new scales Gregory termed the Plagal Modes, and separately they were known as the Æolian, as from A to A on the white keys of the pianoforte; the Hypophrygian, from B to B; the Ionian, from C to C; and the Hypo-mixolydian, from D to D. The Ionian mode was identical in notes—the difference in treatment and temperament apart—with our major scale of C, while in like manner the Æolian mode resembled the modern descending melodic scale of A minor. The eight scales known as the Authentic and Plagal Modes were collectively alluded to as the Church Modes, and continued to govern melodic and harmonic progressions right up to the time of the Reformation.

Like Ambrose, Gregory not only wrote hymns for the service of the church, but he composed many melodies and chants of which it is impossible to give examples here. The melodies of several ancient tunes to be found in various modern collections date probably from the days of Gregory, while the melodies—not the harmonies—of the so-called "Gregorian" chants are imitations, adaptations, or corruptions of the work of Gregory and his contemporaries.

On proceeding to inquire how these melodies, etc., have been transmitted and handed down from age to age, we are enabled to prove that in the first place at least early Christian music was, as regards the nature of its transmission, (4th) *oral*. The earliest attempt at musical notation was a series of dots and scratches, probably suggested by the accents and points employed in the Greek and Hebrew characters. These signs were termed Neumæ, and are said to have been first used by St. Ephraim at the end of the fourth century. In course of time the Neumæ began to be written upon a line, to which a second was afterwards added, the former being red, the latter yellow, until about the eleventh century, when a four-lined stave was used, which eventually paved the way for the introduction of our modern system of notation.

We now leave the musical characteristics of early Christian music, and will next month commence our inquiry into the manner of its public performance.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

HIGHBURY.—The Quadrant Church has decided to adopt the Congregational Church Hymnal.

PROVINCIAL.

AIRDRIE.—A handsome organ, the gift of Mr. Forrester, has been opened in Wellwynd United Presbyterian Church.

CARNARVON.—A choral festival of the Welsh Wesleyan Churches has been held. Seven choirs took part, Mr. H. G. Foulkes conducting.

CHARFIELD.—A sale of work realised £13 in aid of the organ fund in connection with the Congregational Church.

COLVILLE.—Special musical services at Ebenezer

Chapel realised £10, which was devoted to the reduction of the debt on the school-rooms.

DENTON.—Choir sermons have been preached in the United Methodist Free Church, by Rev. G. Hargreaves, of Cardiff. The services were largely musical, selections from the oratorios being given both morning and evening. In the afternoon the choir gave an excellent rendering of the cantata "The Ruler's Daughter."

DORCHESTER.—An entirely reconstructed and enlarged organ was on Sunday, the 29th July, opened in the Congregational church, South-street. The instrument which it replaced was an antiquated chamber-organ. The pastor, the Rev. William Gooby, took the initiative in the matter of the renovation, and the work was carried out from his designs by Messrs. Nicholson and Lord, of Walsall, at a cost of under £200. The specification is subjoined:—

GREAT ORGAN—Compass CC to G. 56 notes.				
1. Open Diaps.	...	Metal and wood	...	8 ft. ... 56 pipes
2. Stopped Diaps.	...	Wood	...	8 " ... 56 "
3. Gamba	...	Metal, bass grooved	...	8 " ... 41 "
4. Flute	...	Wood	...	4 " ... 56 "
5. Principal	...	Metal	...	4 " ... 56 "
6. Fifteenth	...	"	...	2 " ... 56 "
7. Clarionet	...	"	...	8 " ... 44 "
SWELL ORGAN.				
8. Stopped Diaps.	...	Wood	...	8 " ... 56 "
9. Viol d'amour	...	Metal, bass grooved	...	8 " ... 41 "
10. Voix Celeste	...	Metal	...	8 " ... 44 "
11. Flageolet flute	...	Wood	...	4 " ... 56 "
12. Clarabella	...	Wood, bass grooved	...	8 " ... 41 "
13. Gemshorn	...	Metal	...	4 " ... 56 "
14. Hautboy	...	"	...	8 " ... 56 "
15. Mixture	...	"	...	2 ranks.
PEDAL ORGAN.				
16. Bourdon	...	Wood	...	16 ft. ... 32 "
COUPLERS.				
17. Sw. to Gt.	...	18. Sw. to peds.	...	19. Gt. to peds.
2 Combination pedals to Great Organ.				

The day's services included anthems "I will lift up mine eyes" and "Oh, worship the Lord," from the new "Congregational Church Hymnal" (which has been in use since the beginning of this year), "Te Deum" (to Oakeley's chant), "The strain upraise," Bunnett's "Magnificat," etc.; and Mr. Nicholson, of Walsall, who presided on the occasion, played for voluntaries "Andantino" (Battiste), "Angels ever bright and fair" (Handel), and "Hallelujah Chorus" ("Mount of Olives"). At the conclusion of the evening service a short recital, at which there was a large attendance, was given, Mr. Nicholson concluding with Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." The selections served to display the variety and sweetness of tone. The organ reflects the greatest credit on the builders, and has given unbounded satisfaction.

GLASTONBURY.—Miss England, organist of the Congregational church, on the occasion of her marriage with Mr. E. J. Edghill, was presented with a chiffonier from the congregation and an electro-mounted jar from the Sunday-school, both suitably inscribed. A large congregation witnessed the ceremony.

GRANTHAM.—The choir of the Congregational Church celebrated their anniversary on the 19th and 20th ult. The sacred cantata, "Calvary," was given on the Sunday afternoon and Monday evening by the choir, assisted by an orchestral band conducted by Mr. J. J. Jelley. Mr. Bellamy was at the organ, the vocalists being Mrs. Spriggs, Miss Harrison, Miss B. Rawson, and Mr. Jelley.

GREAT MARLOW.—The service of song "The Little Pilgrim" was performed in connection with the Baptist chapel Sunday-school anniversary services.

GUISBOROUGH.—The scholars attending the Congregational Sunday-school held their anniversary on the 12th ult. in the chapel. The services were conducted

by the Rev. H. Kendall, of Darlington. A service of song, entitled "Two Golden Lilies," was rendered by the scholars, the choir assisting. The offertories were for the Sunday-school fund. The services were well attended.

HASTINGS.—The death is announced of Mr. James Wrenn Crump, a promising young man, only twenty-one years of age. He was much interested in sacred music, and occasionally officiated as organist at Robertson-street Chapel.

HORNSEA.—On Sunday, July 29th, the Rev. Eben. Goold, M.A., formerly pastor of the church, preached the anniversary sermons in connection with the Congregational Church Choir to large congregations. In the afternoon a musical service was given, when the congregation nearly filled the church. The Rev. E. Goold, Mus. Bac., presided, and gave a short address. Mr. R. T. Clark Morrison presided at the organ, and was assisted by Mr. W. J. Lamb. The following was the order of the service: Hymn, "Now thank we all our God;" confession, Lord's Prayer; anthem, "The Lord is my strength" (Monk); chant, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord" (Attwood); solo, "Come unto Him" (Handel), Miss Burn; hymn, "Glory to God on high" (Prout); short address by the Rev. Eben. Goold, Mus. Bac.; chorus, solo, and quartette, "No shadows yonder" (from Gaul's "Holy City"); organ solo, "Fanfare" (Lemming), Mr. W. J. Lamb; solo and choral sanctus, "A new heaven and a new earth" (from Gaul's "Holy City"), Mr. Wm. Gibson; hymn, "Crown Him with many crowns" (Elvey); anthem, "Lift up your heads" (Hopkins); hymn, "Onward, Christian soldiers!" (Sullivan). Collections were made at all the services.

LOWER HEYWOOD.—A new organ has been opened in the Baptist chapel, of which the Rev. J. Flatt is pastor.

NEWBURY.—The service of song "Pioneers of Primitive Methodism" was recently performed at a meeting convened by Mr. James Godfrey, for many years circuit steward.

NORLAND.—An organ has been opened in the Baptist chapel.

NORTHAMPTON.—Mr. S. Snedker, for five years leader of Victoria Chapel Choir, has, on resigning, been presented with a timepiece.

OSWESTRY.—On the 16th ult. the members of Christ Church Choir had a picnic on Llyncllys Hill, where Mr. W. W. Coulson, the choir-master, and Mrs. Coulson, who has been a member of the choir, were presented with an elegant tea and coffee service on the occasion of their marriage. The following day, at the close of the weekly service, Mr. Coulson received a handsome timepiece, the gift of the church and congregation.

OVENDEN.—A funeral service of a musical character was held in Providence Chapel, in connection with the death of two members.

QUINTA.—In connection with the anniversary services of the Congregational church a special choir, conducted by Mr. Harold Barnes, and accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Barnes, gave selections from Gaul's cantata "The Holy City." The solos were taken by Mrs. Harold Barnes, Miss Dutton, and Mr. E. W. Smith.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Mr. Samuel Winship has been presented with an address and purse of gold from the church and congregation at Kingsfield, and an album from the choir, in recognition of his fourteen years' service as organist and two years' service as deacon, on the occasion of his leaving the town.

SOUTH CROYDON.—A new organ was opened in the Congregational church on August 12th, when special

services were held. The pastor, the Rev. J. Alden Davies, preached suitable sermons.

STAINDROP.—The Sunday-school anniversary in connection with the Congregational church was held on the 12th ult. In the morning and evening two excellent sermons were preached by the Rev. T. Bowes. The afternoon service consisted of recitations by the scholars and selections of music by the choir, which were exceedingly well rendered. Collections were taken after each service on behalf of the Sunday-school.

ST. HELEN'S.—The choir and friends of the Park-road Wesleyan Chapel recently had a drive to Frodsham. The day was showery, but the party visited Overton Hill and other parts of the district.

ST. LEONARDS.—On the 8th ult. Bodiam was the destination of some twenty-five members of the Warriors-square Presbyterian Church Choir, and a right jolly time they spent there, nothing occurring to mar the proceedings in any manner. The arrangements were carried out by the organist of the church (Mr. H. H. Putland), who did himself no small amount of credit in his efforts to see that one and all enjoyed themselves.

WELLINGBOROUGH.—Miss M. E. Humphries, on the occasion of her marriage with Mr. C. Nicholson, has been presented by the Congregational Church Choir with a silver salver, and by the Church and congregation with a silver cake-basket.

WHIXALL.—An American organ has been opened at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Welsh End, when sermons were preached by the Rev. T. Saddler, late missionary in New Zealand. Mr. C. H. Williams ably presided at the organ, and special pieces were sung by the choir. Collections were made in aid of the organ fund.

Correspondence.

(We shall be glad to receive communications from any of our readers on questions likely to be of general interest.)

WANT OF TASTE IN ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENTS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—On the Sunday before Bank Holiday I was visiting at one of the popular south-coast watering-places, and in the evening attended one of the fashionable churches (Church of England). It is a beautiful building, and is in every way well fitted up. There is a splendid organ, at which a Doctor of Music presides. He is a brilliant performer and a clever musician, but I think I hardly ever heard more ludicrous accompaniments. In Psalm xxix., for instance, in verse 6, the passage, "He maketh them also to skip like a calf," was accompanied by a series of semitones such as F sharp to G, C sharp to D, played in a "hop, skip, and jump" style, through two or three octaves. Certainly it suggested a very peculiar kind of calf. Then in verse 8, the passage, "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to bring forth young, and discovereth the thick bushes," was accompanied by a fearful rumbling of the bass notes of the organ. I presume this was supposed to represent the tanglements of "the thick bushes." At the last portion of the tenth verse, "The Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace," we had a shake on a soft flute all through the passage. The whole psalm was sung in unison. This gave the organist an opportunity of displaying most original, and certainly very frivolous taste in his accompaniments. It is impossible to describe all the tricks and dodges this worthy Mus. Doc. made use of.

They required hearing to be understood and believed.

The hymns, too, were played in much the same style. For instance, we were favoured with another growl amongst the pedals, indicative of darkness, I presume, when we sang—

"Holy, Holy, Holy! though the darkness hide Thee."

All through this popular hymn we had first a shake, then a quick run of perhaps six or eight notes between the lines, then some free accompaniment of the lightest character. The intention, no doubt, was to put proper expression into the singing, but as a matter of fact it took away the solemnity of the occasion and distracted the religious feelings.

I trust what I have stated may be a warning to some young organists who are eager to go in for descriptive accompaniments.—Yours truly,

F. H.

P.S.—Have any of your readers ever heard an organ laugh? I imagine not, and it is hardly credible that an attempt to imitate laughter should be made. But such is the case. On the following Sunday I was tempted to attend this church again, to see if my previous experience was accidental or was a fair specimen. I found the same frivolity in the organist's ideas as before. The height of absurdity—not to use any stronger expression—was where by a series of shakes and jerks he endeavoured to imitate laughter in the 14th verse of Psalm lxx., "The valleys also shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing."

WORN-OUT VOICES.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I can sympathise with "A Choirmaster" in his difficulty of getting rid of members of his choir who have seen better days. I had at one time two members who sang much out of tune, though they did not know it themselves. It was positively painful to hear them, so it was absolutely necessary for them to go. I told them politely, I hope, and in as pleasant a way as I could, the facts of the case, and asked them to resign. This they did, I admit not very willingly, and I think I have not lost their respect as a result of my action. I would therefore advise your correspondent to have the courage of his convictions, and speak plainly, but firmly and kindly, to the owners of the worn-out voices, and ask them to give up their membership.—Yours truly,

A. Z.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—If I was in your correspondent's position I should first consult with the minister and deacons, and explain to them the facts of the case. If they approve of dismissing the offending members it will not be a difficult matter to carry out, and the responsibility will not rest entirely on the choirmaster.—Yours truly,

R. S.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HYMNAL.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—In the notice of the "Congregational Church Hymnal" in the August number of your Journal there is one slight error that you will, perhaps, allow me to correct.

The writer of the notice says, "The editorial work has really been done by Nonconformist organists." "We believe that a small committee of organists and others were associated with the Rev. G. S. Barrett, the general editor, in editing, and they have done their work well."

The fact, however, is not as your reviewer states. A committee consisting both of ministers and of organists was appointed, with the editor, to select a body of tunes which in their judgment it was desirable should be inserted in the hymnal; but this selection was in no way final, nor did it supersede the responsibility of the editor in his choice of tunes and in their adaptation to particular hymns. As a matter of fact, and as stated in Dr. Hannay's Preface to the Hymnal, the responsibility for the choice of the tunes rested on myself, and I made use of a very large number of tunes which had not been included in the original number suggested by the consultative committee.

I mention this, not in any way to disparage the value of the suggestions made by the special committee, but simply because the members of that committee might very justly object to being charged with any responsibility for the book, when their function was confined to consultation and advice.

I may add that no part of my work cost me more time and labour and more anxious thought than the selection of the tunes and their appropriation to suitable hymns, and I am very thankful for the approval that your reviewer and musical critics generally have given to this part of the Hymnal.

Dr. Hopkins carefully revised the harmonies of all the non-copyright tunes, and enriched the book with some very valuable tunes of his own composition, but beyond this his work did not extend.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE S. BARRETT.

VOLUNTARIES AND ANTHEMS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Your correspondent will find the volumes compiled by Dr. Frost easy and effective, and as an anthem-book that arranged by Darnton, "Anthems for Church and Home," will be found very suitable, no insuperable difficulties appearing for an ordinary choir, and the whole of them being well harmonized and very congregational.—Yours faithfully,

FRAS. ADAMS.

ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Bayliss seems to miss my real point, the necessity of the pedal stops forming a true bass, in his fears of duplication, complication, etc., etc. Old organs had this bass down to G or F, as far as the Great and Choir were concerned; but the moderns, while properly restricting the compass to C, omit the deep tones which Green and Snetzler thought so necessary, providing in their stead a large stopped bass and a huge open flute miscalled diapason, bass to nothing. If the diapason be (orchestral) the strings, then the double bass is replaced by the big drum, while the bassoon and its double, the trombone, the tuba, etc., find no representatives, except in the largest organs, when they are impossible of ready and quick change.

The pedal specified by me, though rather more expensive, would be a real bass. It would not take up more room, because each stop requires but twelve pipes, the upper being cheaply borrowed from corresponding manual stops, if built on the Casson system, instantly accessible, and but little more complicated, though complication is a relative and should be a secondary matter; efficiency is the *sine quâ non*. If the couplers, octave or otherwise, were disposed with the stops which they affect, and governed, like them, by composition pedals, there need be no difficulty in getting at them, nor, if well made, should they affect the touch to an injurious extent.

As Mr. Bayliss has ten manual stops to my eight, I

will add two more—a Lieblich-Gedact 16 ft. and soft Salicional 8 ft., with an octave coupler to Great. This coupler should be a *clear* coupler, acting on pallets.

This is a very interesting subject, and I hope other organists will favour us with their views on this really essential matter.—Yours truly,

Croydon.

H. S. PRENTICE.

MINISTER OR ORGANIST?

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—The opinion as regards the selection of tunes by a minister must vary according to the knowledge and ability which the organist and minister respectively have in appropriating tunes to hymns. I think it matters very little, so long as it is known by the congregation that errors in judgment made by the minister must not be set down to the organist. I know of some organists who have no proper idea at all of the suitability of hymns to tunes, and in other cases I have known that a minister's selection has always been made with musical taste. As the "Organist of Experience" apparently accepted the appointment with his eyes open, I think he had better submit with a good grace at once, as he may then be able, as opportunities occur, to give successful advice which may tend to make the minister's selection of tunes suitable at all times.—Yours truly,

FORTUNATUS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—I have read the letter of your correspondent, "An Organist of Twenty Years' Standing," and can offer him my hearty sympathy, for I have had twice to struggle against a similar difficulty, the only difference being that the right to select the tunes was sought to be taken from me, and not, as in his case, to be regained from the minister. Speaking generally, I think the selection of music is essentially a part of the choir-master's duties. He best knows the condition of the choir on a given day, and the amount of support the congregation are likely to need; and, as he is responsible for the proper execution of the musical portion of the service, he should have full liberty in his choir. If the minister is choir-master, by virtue of the double office he selects both hymns and tunes; and if, though not choir-master, he is a cultured musician, co-operation is very desirable, provided the authority is left ultimately with the appointed choir-master. But unfortunately, the minister's knowledge of music is more often imagined or superficial than real and intelligent; and if this be the cause of your correspondent's objection, I can only suggest that he should endeavour to enlist the sympathy and support of intellectual members of the congregation in his attempt to gain what is the right and privilege of his office. It may require time, but patience will succeed where undue haste would only produce worse confusion. If, however, the case is hopeless, the only choice is between submission and resignation of the appointment. I took the latter course with very satisfactory results.—Yours truly,

ONLY HALF AS TALL.

MUSIC IN COUNTRY CHURCHES.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—The music at many of our country churches and chapels is at a very low ebb. The organists are not at fault, for they do their best to improve matters. I fear it must be attributed to the apathy of the congregations, and in some instances to the want of attention and energy on the part of the choirs. How can this be altered? I read every month your account of a musical service at one of the London churches, where

everything seems to be satisfactory, or very nearly so. Would it not be possible for arrangements to be made for some of the leading organists and choir-masters to pay a visit to some of our country churches? They might show us how to improve our music, and an evening's instruction with the choir and congregation would revive the interest of the people. If, say, five or six gentlemen could devote a week to such work, and each of them visit six or seven churches during the week, their influence would affect a large area, and much benefit would accrue. Of course this proposal could not be carried out without expense. But if each church visited contributed a small sum it would probably be sufficient to meet all liabilities, and the expenditure would be a good investment. There ought to be no difficulty on this ground. Trusting that this suggestion may tend to practical results,—Yours truly,

A COUNTRY MUSICIAN.

To Correspondents.

OUR hearty thanks are due to several subscribers who have given us information in reply to our inquiries. Will our friends kindly accept this recognition of their assistance?

A. L.—"Organs, Organists, and Choirs," by E. Minshall, is published by Curwen and Sons, 8, Warwick-lane, E.C.

T. F. (Birmingham).—Possibly so. You had better see it first.

S. D.—We can speak favourably of the firm you name.

M. H. (Plymouth).—It is under consideration.

DIAPASON.—Declined with thanks.

ALF. O.—(1) Yes. (2) Uncertain. (3) Novello and Co.

B. G.—You will find Stainer's Organ Primer (Novello) very useful.

The following are thanked for their letters:—C. D. (Coventry), A. S. (Bristol), F. P. (Llandudno), F. N. (Peterborough), N. R. (Birmingham), V. F. (Blackburn), W. B. (Newcastle).

A YOUNG man who was to be married in church to a Miss Way, after a courtship of four years, privately requested the choir not to open the services by singing "This is the Way I long have sought."

MISS POUNDER (who has been having a wrestling-match with the keyboard of the piano): "Have you a sensitive musical ear, Mr. Tympanum?" Mr. T. (more candid than polite): "Yes, I am sorry to say that I have."

IGNORANCE and want of taste in hearers is sometimes a source of great annoyance to performers who are striving to produce effect. As an illustration we will mention a fact that occurred in Constantinople. An English band once performed for the entertainment of the Sultan and his court. At the conclusion he requested them to play the great piece again, as he liked that better than any of the others. They recommenced with the first piece on the programme. They were quickly stopped, however, as it was not the right one. They tried another and another with as little success, till the whole programme was exhausted. The leader then suggested to the performers that perhaps he mistook their tuning the instruments for a piece, and they accordingly began to tune them again, when the incarnate royalty exclaimed: "Is hallah! Heaven be praised!—that is it!"

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